

Recursion

by erindarroch

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Summary: Post-TFA, AU. Han Solo survived the attack by Kylo Ren and made his way back to Leia. Together they face the prospect of a return to full-scale war. And the Force has awoken in some rather unexpected places... This is sort of a "missing moment" between chapters 13 and 14 of "Remain in Light", which can be found on this archive. You should probably read that first!

1. Chapter 1

Recursion

****by Erin Darroch****

****Notes:****__ This fic is AU, diverging significantly from official canon after the events on Starkiller Base in SW: TFA. It is also (like my other post-TFA stories) set roughly in the universe established by Susan Zahn (suezahn), with her kind permission._

This story falls between chapters thirteen and fourteen of Remain in Light, also written by me, which can be found on A03 or . If you haven't read that story, you may be slightly confused about what's going on with Han Solo. The Cliffs Notes version is (a) Han's not dead and (b) the Force has awakened in some unexpected places.

Finally, the first chapter contains sexually explicit material. Skip to chapter two if that's not your cuppa.

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****Chapter 1: ****

Han kept his eyes closed, enjoying Leia's bold touch as she followed

the contours of his abdomen with her hand, moving steadily downwards, rubbing her warm palm across the skin of his lower belly, then turning her hand to slide over his hip bone, and lower still. He heard himself groan at her knowledgeable touch, and felt his body's eager response. Many of his dreams over the past year had featured interludes exactly like this one, so it took him a moment to realise that he wasn't dreaming after all. As he drifted awake, he recalled where he wasâ€”in a plush bed, within a richly appointed hotel suite, on the luxury resort world of Ord Mantell. But, more importantly, he was with his wife.

He cracked his eyes open to peer down at Leia, and swallowed hard at the sight of her leaning over him, trailing warm kisses along the path so recently traced by her fingertips as her hand continued to stroke and caress him. It was not yet dawn, and the light was dim, but he could just make out the shape of her dark head, the pale curve of her shoulder and the graceful line of her bare back. He watched what she was doing for as long as he could manage, but when her mouth took over from the touch of her hand, his eyes rolled back involuntarily, and his head dropped to the pillow. The exquisite sensations caused by her lips and tongue drew another groan of pleasure from his throat. He reached down to slide his fingers through her hair, then caressed the nape of her neck and trailed his fingers down the indentation of her spine.

How did we get here, Sweetheart?

Apart from the physical gratification of Leia's attentions, he felt pure happiness swell within him at the simple fact of waking up in the same bed with his wife again, after more than a year apart and an emotional estrangement that had lasted even longer. Their reunion had been everything he'd wished for during that lonely timeâ€”cathartic, healing and hopeful. Although he hadn't expected ever to feel those things again, his own burgeoning awareness of the Force had opened up a million new possibilities between them, an astonishing development in a marriage that had so far spanned over thirty years.

Through that mysterious energy field, he could feel an echo of Leia's own pleasure, and the warm ripple of deep affection emanating from her as she caressed him. Gripped by the need to reciprocate, to show her all over again how much she meant to him, he tugged gently on her shoulder to pull her up. He ran his hands up and down her body as she moved, then guided her to straddle him. As she rose above him and then settled her weight astride his hips, he saw the glimmer of a smile in her dark eyes, and he grinned back.

Forget the analysis, Solo. Just enjoy it.

The final hour of the night disappeared without either of them noticing. They made love slowly, almost languorously, in a tender affirmation of everything they'd said to each other the evening beforeâ€”with words, with their bodies, and through the power of the Forceâ€”until the brightening sky heralded dawn on Ord Mantell.

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****Chapter 2: ****

Later, freshly showered and feeling completely sated, Han lay sprawled on his back in the bed alone. The day before had been easily one of the most satisfying of his life, and he was still in a pleasant daze. He rocked his head to the side to look through the window at the awakening landscape of Ord Mantell, recalling with a faint smile the moment on the shuttle pier when he'd first seen Leia again after their parting on D'Qar. Although they'd been communicating with each other through the Force for something like eight days by that pointâ€"a fact that still had the power to astonish them both â€"nothing matched the deep gratification he felt when he saw the love in her eyes and felt her fierce embrace. His brush with death at the hands of their son had done what nothing else had the power to do. It had finally shattered Leia's last hope of turning Ben back to the Light, but it had also brought them back together.

The power of the Force and its role in recent events was undeniable, and Han was long past the point of dismissing it. In fact, he was still thoroughly enjoying his own newly developed sensitivity to it. On impulse, he reached out through that unseen dimension and easily found Leia's familiar presence in the adjoining fresher where she'd disappeared a few moments before. He was a fast learner, and he'd already picked up on the fact that he could sense her without disturbing her. It was a pleasurable sensation, reassuring and warm, to know even without being able to see her that she was safe. Whatever else the future might hold for them, he hoped that his new ability would prove to be permanent.

Holding his awareness of Leia in his mind and listening to the sounds of her moving around in the shower, he allowed himself to think about the future. About their daughter. About their son. The same quiver of unease that always gripped him when he considered such things rippled through him again at the thought of what was to come, and how they would face it.

So much of what they'd thought lost forever had been restoredâ€"their marriage, their daughter and, indeed, Han's own freedom and good health. But despite the fact that his personal circumstances had improved enormously in the past few days, he was aware that their current idyllic situation was strictly temporary. They were due to meet Poe Dameron, Finn and their other companions at the shuttle station in a couple of hours, and then they'd all be on their way to the new Resistance base on Kodosâ€"and heading straight into outright war.

The recent destruction of the Hosnian System had pushed the simmering conflict between the First Order and the Resistance to a rolling boil, and Leia would be at the very heart of the coming action, whatever form that might take. The attack from Starkiller Base had destroyed multiple worlds and billions of beingsâ€"an appalling act carried out by madmen for the sake of eliminating the New Republic. And although the Resistanceâ€"with some help from Han himselfâ€"had

obliterated that particular threat, Han's experience told him that there would be more to come.

Leia had seen first-hand the terrible consequences of allowing power to concentrate unchecked in the hands of a few when, at the age of nineteen, she'd witnessed the obliteration of her own home world of Alderaan. The experience had marked her profoundly on a personal level, but it also continued to exert a strong influence on her politics. As a former New Republic Senator herself, and now as the leader of the Resistance, Leia was one of the few surviving public figures who could feasibly raise the banners and rally the galaxy to oppose the First Order. And Han knew his wife very well; there could be no doubt that she planned to do exactly that.

The drone of the hot-air dryers being turned on in the fresher finally prompted Han to climb back out of their rumpled bed and begin thinking about the day ahead. He made his way to the small kitchen to start the kaffe brewing before Leia emerged looking for her morning fix, and then went to the suite's communications panel to punch in an order for breakfast. He suspected this Ord Mantell interlude would be their last experience of luxury for a long time, and he intended to make the most of it. With those tasks accomplished, he retrieved the small case containing the clothes and personal items he'd purchased on Eufornis Major and returned to the bedroom to get dressed.

As he tucked his shirt in, and then sat on the edge of the bed to pull his boots on, he thought with some despair about the coming war. It would be the third galactic conflict in his lifetime, although it was likely the last he would live to see. He'd been a kid, only seven or eight years old, when the Clone Wars began, and his entire life had been dominated in one way or another by the power and influence of the Galactic Empire that had emerged during that time. As a young man, he'd been caught up in the subsequent civil war, thanks to dumb luck, a pressing need for money, and his own convoluted sense of honourâ€”not to mention his unexpected but irresistible compulsion to stick close to a certain feisty princess. And now, with his old age looming on the horizon, it appeared he would be swept up in another epic struggle, with Leia at the centre once again.

Fully dressed now, Han made a circuit of the hotel suite, gathering up their scattered items and dumping them into his case. He returned to the kitchen and poured himself a cup of kaffe, then turned to lean back against the countertop as he sipped it. Through the tall windows on the far wall opposite him, the busy air traffic of Ord Mantell was getting busier as the sky grew brighter. A steady stream of spacecraft from a hundred different worlds landed and took off as he watched. For a fleeting moment, he entertained a daydream about whisking Leia away on one of those ships to some distant planet where the coming war would never reach them. He wasn't a coward, and neither was she. But he couldn't shake the dread he felt at the prospect of a return to open warfare, particularly with their son fighting on the side of the opposition, and their daughter now likely to be swept up in the conflict, too. His worst fear was that their children would be drawn into another confrontation with each other. And he knew that there could be no happy ending for any of them if that happened again.

In his more honest moments Han could admitâ€”at least to himselfâ€”that if he had the chance to do it all over again, he wouldn't hesitate to run away and leave the galaxy to carry on its

endless wars without him and his family. If he'd had any idea back then of what would happen to their children, he'd have taken them and his wife to the Outer Rim, the Unknown Regions—or anywhere, as far away as the Falcon could fly—to live out their days in obscurity, and relative safety.

But that sort of thinking was pure fantasy. Leia had always been driven to fight against corruption and oppression, despite the personal cost to herself—or perhaps because of it. After so many years together, Han knew that she would never give in to the notion of quitting or walking away; not when there was still work to be done, not when there was still any hope of success. Nothing short of continuous sedation would have made her ignore the threat of the First Order once she'd perceived it. And nothing now would stop her going up against the so-called "Supreme Leader" Snoke, the vile creature who'd deliberately targeted and corrupted their son.

The thought of Snoke sent a shudder of revulsion through Han's body. He turned his head and closed his eyes for a moment, trying to shake the image of Ben, dressed in the garb of Kylo Ren and carrying a red lightsaber, that loomed in his mind. The last thing he wanted to think about this morning was that sputtering blade of malevolent energy, the menacing young man who wielded it, or the monstrous creature behind it all.

As he turned away from the window, his eye fell upon the half-empty bottle of Whyren's Reserve that he'd shared with Leia the night before. Setting his cup down on the counter, he retrieved the bottle, tightened the cap and went back into the bedroom to stash it in his case. They still had a journey of at least three standard days in front of them before they reached the new base in the Nastasi system, and Han reckoned the whiskey could be put to good use in that time. He'd been away from the Resistance for more than a year, and a couple of Leia's current travel companions were new to him. He'd also inadvertently acquired new companions of his own, in the form of two First Order medics who'd treated his wounds aboard the Avarshina medical station. He thought a dose or two of good Corellian whiskey might help smooth things out as they all got to know one another.

Having run out of things to do, Han walked around to the far side of the bed and sat on the edge facing the tall window to while away the time watching the bustling Ord Mantell landscape. Despite his efforts to distract himself, though, his thoughts kept wandering back to Snoke. Leia wanted Snoke dead, and Han was absolutely on board with that plan. But to achieve that goal she would need troops, ships, equipment and supplies, all of which had been exceedingly scarce in recent years, as she'd battled both the rise of the First Order and the wilful ignorance of many of her former colleagues in the New Republic Senate.

The First Order's appalling destruction of an entire star system presented Leia with a challenge, because many denizens of the galaxy would now be even more fearful, and worried, and inclined to avoid conflict. But it also presented her with an opportunity. The entire galaxy would have learned by now about the destruction of Hosnian Prime and the Galactic Senate, and outrage over that atrocity would garner substantial support—material support, as well as political support—for the Resistance. It was an opportunity he knew Leia wouldn't overlook.

As he mused over that thought, he heard the fresher door open, and looked over his shoulder to see Leia approaching. She'd chosen to dress in simple but elegant civilian garb, he was pleased to see, instead of the drab military uniform she usually wore, and her hair was still unbound. He grinned at her.

"You look great." The unabashed compliment was only a faint echo of Han's actual thoughts. To his eye, she looked fantastic; refreshed, relaxed and happy.

She rolled her eyes at him, but her mouth tilted in a smile as she tossed her hair brush on top of her case, and walked around the bed to where he sat. She moved to stand between his knees, then curled her fingers through his hair, and leaned into his embrace. With him seated, they were nearly at eye level.

"I feel pretty great," she admitted, smiling into his eyes.

Han allowed his hands to roam over the contours of her body, and gave her a lewd wink. "You sure do."

She rolled her eyes at him again, but then she kissed him anyway, apparently forgiving the bad joke. Her lips were soft, her body even softer, and she smelled of lumeria soap. She melted against him without reservation, winding her arms around his neck as she deepened the kiss and, for a moment, Han considered tumbling her back onto the bed. Not for sex—he didn't think he could manage again so soon, no matter how good she felt—but just to hold her, to keep her smiling and kissing him like this for a little while longer. But Leia was already thinking of other things.

"Mmm, you taste like kaffe," she murmured as she broke the kiss and began to pull away.

He released her, and she turned to make her way towards the kitchen, compelled by her mild addiction, and drawn by the rich aroma wafting from there. Han turned his head to watch her go, realising that his face was plastered with a smile.

He still felt mildly bemused by recent events, and the vagaries of his own fortunes. Nearly murdered by his own son; rescued, healed and then surrendered by a sworn enemy; and finally reunited with his estranged wife—all in the span of perhaps fifteen or sixteen days. It was more than a little overwhelming.

And he hadn't missed the significance of Leia's decision to meet him in person on Ord Mantell, instead of allowing her envoys to deliver him to her base. The fact that she was here with him at such a crucial time—instead of marshalling her forces for war—said more about the depth of her feelings for him than mere words ever could.

The door to the suite chimed and Han jumped up to answer it, passing Leia in the kitchen as he went. She gave him a quizzical eyebrow over the rim of her cup, too intent upon drinking her hot kaffe to put the question into words.

"Breakfast," Han explained as he reached to palm the door open. "You wore me out, Sweetheart. I need to recover my strength."

He was rewarded with another roll of the eyes, and a soft snort of amusement. She smirked at him as she lifted the cup to her lips again.

"You haven't seen anything yet, Flyboy."

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3. Chapter 3

Recursion

by Erin Darroch

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Chapter 3:

Over breakfast, General Organa began to re-emerge.

Han could see it in the chrono now strapped to her wrist, and in the way she picked at her food, eating very little of the meal he'd selected for her, despite it being one of her favourite dishes. It manifested in the way she sat back from the table with only her cup of kaffe in her hand, her expression growing increasingly pensive as she watched Han devour his own breakfast. And he heard it in her distracted tone of voice when she answered his question about the transport waiting for them at the resort fleet station, which would be their immediate destination after they departed Ord Mantell.

"I have a new ship," she told him. "A gift from an anonymous benefactor."

She blinked away whatever thoughts had been clouding her mind, and gave him a speculative look. "I was going to ask if you knew anything about it, actually."

"Me?" Han swallowed his food and shook his head, eyeing her with curiosity. "How would I know anything about your new ship?"

"_Ships_, plural. It was one of twelve we received about eight months ago."

"Twelve ships? _Free_? I hope you scanned the hell out of 'em, Sweetheart. And checked 'em for infestation."

He could see Leia control the impulse to roll her eyes at him again. He grinned at her. Of course she would've had them thoroughly scanned. She was no fool.

"Don't worry. We did scan the hell out of them," she confirmed, giving him a mock-sour smile. "And then we manually stripped and checked them for good measure, even though they're all just out of the shipyards." She nodded in response to Han's shocked expression, and took another sip of her drink.

"_New_ ships?" Han did some rapid calculations, trying to estimate

the value of such a gift.

"Yes, all brand new. I was suspicious, too, obviously. So, up until a month ago, they've been in quarantine. I had them split up and stored in a few different placesâ€”Moorja, Cerea, Belsavisâ€”and monitored very carefully. They're clean. I've taken one of the _Arisaig_-class light cruisers for myself."

"_One_ ofâ€”?" Han nearly choked on his kaffe. "That's a nice ship."

"Mm," Leia gave him a tight smile of agreement. "And it's a luxury model. Not _at all_ how I'm accustomed to travelling."

For many years, up until it had been stolen, Leia had almost invariably travelled aboard the _Millennium Falcon_ with Han. But he ignored the teasing gibe about his old freighter, too focused on what she was saying. He wasn't just surprised at what she was telling himâ€”he was confused.

"Why would I know anything about that?" he repeated his earlier question, leaning his folded forearms on the table between them, and trying to hold Leia's gaze.

"Well, it's obvious that you don't," Leia said, hiding her expression behind another sip of kaffe.

"But why would you _think_ I would?" Han persisted, really curious now.

She lifted her eyes to his and shrugged. "They're all from Kuat Drive Yards," she said.

Han drew his head back at the mention of that name, and then gave a short laugh. "Yeah, well, they produce half the ships in the galaxy, Princess."

"I know. But these came from a buyer on Corellia."

"How do you know that? I thought you said it was an anonymous gift."

"It was. But my people are resourceful." She smiled, and reached to set her empty cup on the table. "It took a while, but they managed to track the transactions. We don't have the buyer's name, but the purchase order originated in Doaba Guerfel."

"Oh." Hearing the name of his own birthplace on Corelliaâ€”and the primary residence of his parents and siblingsâ€”made Han blink. "You sure about that?"

"Pretty sure."

He digested that news in silence, and pushed back from the table, lost in thought. After a moment, he met her eyes again and shook his head.

"I don't know, Sweetheart. Funny coincidence, but probably _just_ a coincidence. And you said 'buyer'," he reminded her. "My family wouldn't have to _buy_ the ships. They own 'em."

"Yes, and that's another reason why I think they came from the Corellian Kuats. The original purchase order was actually just a high-level requisition. No evidence of money changing hands."

Han was flummoxed by that news, and now even more wary. He pushed his plate out of the way and leaned toward Leia again, fixing her with a solemn gaze. "And you're absolutely certain they're clean?"

"Absolutely." Leia gave him a wry smile. "They've been practically pulled apart and put back together, and I let them sit in storage for seven months, just to be sure that they weren't equipped with some kind of tracker we don't know about. Or lined with a biological weapon."

"Well." Han blew out a forceful gust of air, and shook his head. "That's one hell of a gift."

That was an understatement. It was a huge show of support for Leia and the Resistance movement, and Han couldn't reconcile that action with anything he knew about his parents, or his younger brother or sister. They'd been on the side of the Imperials in the Galactic Civil War, and Han had been estranged from them since long before that.

"Yes, an unprecedented gift. And although there was no name attached, and I have no proof they came from your family, I have a feeling it was them. Doaba Guerfel's not a big city. It's too strange to be coincidence. And I'm not sure I even believe in coincidences anymore." She paused and tilted her head to one side. "I thought maybe you'd arranged it...while you were gone."

Han shook his head. He'd lived so long away from his family of origin and they'd parted on such bitter terms, he seldom thought about them at all. Although he'd re-established contact with them at Leia's behest after the end of the Galactic Civil War, they weren't what Han would call close—not by a long shot. And the idea of approaching them for help had never occurred to him.

"I did go to Corellia after I...after I left you." He swallowed hard after he said the words. Although he and Leia were firmly reconciled now, the memory of that painful time had not faded, not at all. "But I didn't go to Doaba Guerfel. I went home."

Leia's expression softened and her dark eyes met his. "I thought you might."

"I couldn't stay, though, Leia." Han tossed his napkin over the empty plate, rolled his shoulders uncomfortably, and then sat back in the chair with his hands braced on his thighs.

He felt a knot in his gut, a faint echo of the agony he'd experienced when he'd walked into their vacant house on the outskirts of Coronet City. He'd gone there seeking peace and solace in the aftermath of their bitter breakup, but the visit had only amplified his pain. Their empty bed, the kids' toys, the silence. He hadn't even managed to spend one night there. Within hours of his arrival, he'd been back aboard his replacement ship—a decrepit old YG-4210 freighter that made the Falcon look glamorous—and was soon on his way to the

Corporate Sector, where he'd disappeared into the seedy Bonadan underground for a while.

While he pondered over that grim memory, he felt a stirring through the Force as Leia reached out to him. It was a tentative touch, as if she weren't sure of her reception, but he latched onto it like a lifeline and responded with a rush of love for her, and gratitude that those dark days were behind him. Meeting her gaze, he reached a hand across the table towards her and she took it, wrapping her slim fingers around his with a firm grip. They looked at each other for a long moment. Despite their lengthy conversations of the evening before, there was still much they hadn't discussed, and their time alone was running short. Han gave her a smiling shrug, and offered the abbreviated version.

"I knocked around the Corporate Sector for a couple of months. Wound up bunking on Kashyyyk with Chewie and Malla for a while. Then Chewie and I took off to see Maz, to try and make some money. You know the rest."

Leia regarded him solemnly and he knew that she was piecing together the unspoken aspects of his story, reading between the lines in an effort to understand what he'd gone through during their time of separation. Having lost his wife, both of his children and even the _Falcon_—the source of his livelihood—he'd been as close to despair then as he'd ever been in his life. Not suicidal—that had never been in his nature—but rudderless, adrift, completely lost. When he'd finally gathered himself together enough to do more than lie around the Wookiees' treehouse getting in Malla's way, he'd shifted into a more dangerous mood, becoming as impulsive and reckless as he'd been in his youth.

"That's what we were doing over Jakku," he explained, as an afterthought. "We were on a run for Maz, with some of her people as crew. It wasn't going well."

Leia's eyes narrowed as she processed that information, although the reason for her reaction wasn't clear to Han. After a moment, she gave a smiling shake of her head and released his hand, then stood and walked around the table to where he sat. He scooted the chair back to make room for her and opened his arms to take her onto his knee. She settled down, leaned against him, then nestled her head on his shoulder as he enfolded her in his embrace. She hadn't done that sort of thing in many years, and the gesture made him smile. This was _Leia_ in his arms, not the general. He angled his head to press a kiss against her forehead.

"So. These ships of yours. Are they all _Arisaig_-class?" he asked, steering the conversation back into clearer space.

"No." Leia lifted her head and looked at him, a knowing smile in her eyes. She held up fingers as she counted them off. "Two _Arisaig_ light. Two _Razorbacks_. One _Rannoch_ light freighter. One Corellian strike cruiser, and a _Liberty_ medium. One CC-9600 frigate and one _Pelter_. Plus, an F76 _Trinidad_-B escort with medical. An _Acclamator_-class lander. And a _Ratha_ 580."

Han whistled. "A _battleship_? Damn, Sweetheart. That's some list. An _expensive_ list."

"Mmm," Leia hummed in agreement. "Very."

Han was calculating again, now that he knew which ships she'd been given. The total value of the gift boggled his mind a little. "That doesn't sound like something my family would do."

Leia shrugged and put her head back down on his shoulder. She smoothed one hand down the front of his shirt and picked a thread from the edge of the placket. "People can change, Han."

Han pondered that for a long moment, then gave her light squeeze. "Even if it was them, you said the ships were offered eight months ago. Why would they have made a move like that back then? Even before what happened to Hosnian Prime?"

"I can think of a few reasons," Leia said thoughtfully. "The threat of the First Order was quite clear even then, for anyone willing to look at the facts. Maybe they recognised that threat sooner than most. Maybe their experience with Palpatine and the Empire taught them a lessonâ€|."

"Maybe they listened to one of your speeches." Han suggested.

He'd watched from afar as Leia had gone head-to-head with her former colleagues in the New Republic Senate in a valiant but vain attempt to get them to take pre-emptive action against the First Order. He'd been frustrated and disgusted by how easily dismissed she'd been on the sole basis of her parentage, once it became known that she was the child of Anakin Skywalkerâ€"Darth Vaderâ€"the Sith Lord hated throughout the galaxy. Despite more than thirty years of experience in service to the Alliance, and then to the New Republic, Leia's words of warning had been openly derided and ultimately ignored by the younger generation of senators. They seemed to have missed the fact that the long period of peace enjoyed throughout the galaxy for the past twenty-nine years had been achieved largely due to the efforts of Leia Organa.

"Maybe they did listen," Leia mused softly, and Han could hear the faint ring of hope in her voice.

She was still comfortably cradled in his arms, her head on his shoulder, one hand resting lightly on his chest. He covered her hand with one of his own, savouring the contact. He'd missed her so much over the past year, at times he'd felt a physical ache there, just under where her palm was now pressed. They'd been back together now for scarcely fourteen hours, but already he could feel a sense of well-being and hope rising within him. He was beginning to wonder if there was something beyond the physical realm at work between them. His newly developed sensitivity to the Force was making him rethink his perspective on a lot of things.

He thought again about the remarkable donation she'd received in his absence. He wasn't completely convinced that the new ships had come from his family, but he was intrigued by the idea. The notion of his staunchly Imperialist parents offering the Resistance an unsolicited gift like that was, frankly, ludicrous. They were both in their late eighties now, and unlikely to change their views, even though the Emperor and his Galactic Empire were long dead. Han supposed, if the ships had come from the Corellian branch of the Kuat family at all, they'd been gifted by his brother or sister. But even that suggestion

made him shake his head in disbelief.

"Whoever it was, at least they had the good sense to send you a couple of starfighters in that lot," he remarked. "Two _Razorbacks_, huh? R-12s?"

"R-20s," Leia responded. "Six rounds of proton torpedoes each."

Han laughed. "Somebody's trying to impress you, Princess."

"I_ am_ impressed." Her voice took on a teasing tone. "But do you think they'd be offended if I sent an envoy to exchange one of the frigates for a few more fighters?" She lifted her head to look at him, her expression brightening as if an idea had just occurred to her. "That could be your first mission."

She was half-joking, but her words made Han fall silent as he considered the fact that he was about to rejoin the Resistance—whether officially or unofficially—and what that would entail. He'd long ago resigned his formal commission with the New Republic, a fact for which he'd been heartily thankful after he'd seen their treatment of his wife. Prior to that he'd served as a general with the Alliance, and in his youth he'd been a member of the Imperial Navy. He was familiar enough with military life, but he'd never been a model soldier. He had good skills that aligned nicely with that kind of work—he was a natural leader, a hell of a pilot, and good at strategizing, setting objectives and making quick decisions. But he'd never been the type to blindly follow orders, and he often relied upon instinct and intuition to guide his choices, neither of which were traits particularly compatible with a military career. On the other hand, he had another set of skills entirely—those he'd acquired during his long career as a freighter captain and smuggler—that he could put to good use again if Leia needed them. Her joking mention of a "mission" made him wonder exactly what sort of role she had in mind for him.

Leia was watching him as he mulled over those issues, and she seemed to pick up on his train of thought. She slipped her hand from under his and brought it to his face, drawing his eyes to hers. She looked abashed. "I'm sorry, Han. I'm making a lot of assumptions. I don't mean to—".

"Oh, I'm with you, Sweetheart," Han interrupted her swiftly, wanting to erase all doubt. Just in case it wasn't perfectly clear, he repeated with emphasis. "I'm with you one-hundred percent."

"Good. I'm glad." She dropped her hand and reared back to look at him more openly, still balanced on his knee. "We need you."

"_We_ need?" He gave her an incredulous look, simultaneously exasperated and amused by her choice of words. A faint tinge of pink coloured her cheeks then, and she ducked her head.

"_I_ need," she whispered, and leaned in to brush his lips with a soft kiss. "_I_ need you, Han."

"You've got me, Sweetheart," he assured her, murmuring against her mouth.

Mollified by her confession, he lifted a hand to her face and drew

her even closer, kissing her thoroughly and with warmth. When they parted, she was smiling again.

"Soâ€¦," she ventured, her tone still lightly teasing. "If I asked you to go to Doaba Guerfel and see about exchanging a frigate for meâ€¦?"

"Whatever you need, Leia." He looked into her eyes and hoped she could see the absolute conviction he felt when he said those words. "Anything."

Her expression sobered and he saw her swallow hard. She nodded.

"You'll need a few things, too," she said, softly. "A ship, for one. You can have the Rannoch, if you want it. It's a nice freighter."

Han briefly jogged the knee she was perched upon and scowled at her. "Hey! I've got a ship!"

She shook her head in disbelief. "Han, these are new ships, remember?"

"I don't care," he insisted stubbornly. "When Chewie gets back with the Falcon, we're going to strip it out and re-fit it."

Leia regarded him with an incredulous expression, then leaned against him again and put her head back on his shoulder, hiding her face from his view. "We did what we could to help Chewie get it in shape before they left for Ahch-To, but it's definitely seen better days. Chewie said most of the modifications you made to it have been removed."

"I know. I got a look at some of that on the way to Takodana." He was still scowling, deeply vexed at the thought of how his ship had been treated by the thieves who'd stolen her from him, and the string of owners who'd abused her in the meantime. "It's going to take me a year to put her back to the way she was."

"Luckily, I think you'll have some time, provided the First Order behave as we expect them to. Certainly not a year, but a couple of months anyway."

"And even more luckily," Han ventured, "I know a very well-connected general who can commandeer me some parts."

Leia gave a soft snort and lifted her head to look at him. "And you think this well-connected general of yours is going to help you out?"

"I know she is. They ripped out the real-water shower and put sonics back in." He raised his eyebrows and nodded at her appalled expression. "Ah-ha-ha! See? I knew that would motivate you."

Leia's look of exaggerated outrage melted swiftly into amused affection. She kissed him briefly and then straightened up, preparing to stand. She tilted her wrist to glance at her chrono. "We'd better get going."

"Okay." Han gave her a casual pat on the hip as she stood. "I'll get our cases."

"Oh, that reminds me," Leia said. "I have something for you in mine. Wait right here."

As Leia disappeared into the bedroom, Han cleared away the breakfast dishes from the table and carried them back to the small kitchen. Leaning back against the countertop, he glanced around the suite again and smiled. Whatever else happened, he would hold on to the memory of their reunion here on Ord Mantell for a long time.

Leia returned a moment later carrying both small cases. Crossing the room, she placed them on the table, then popped open her own case and rummaged around in the bottom. As Han approached to stand at her side, she withdrew a bulky item that made his face split into a broad grin. One of his old DL-44 blasters. She handed it over with a faint smile, and then reached back into her case to extract a well-worn holster rig—one he'd long ago replaced but had never discarded—and then she turned to face him.

Han stared at her, grinning like a Gungan, momentarily lost for words.

Leia gave a smiling shrug at his expression. "I didn't know what sort of shape you'd be in, but I figured you'd have been stripped of weapons. And I thought you'd feel better with one of those by your side."

"Hell, yeah," Han said with deep sincerity. He hefted the blaster in one hand, smiling with satisfaction at the familiar weight of it, and the way the grip fit snugly into his palm.

Leia moved closer and reached around him to pull the holster rig around his body.

Han stood still, gazing down at her as she pulled the ends around to the front and clicked the metal clasp together, then settled the belt around his hips. He watched in silence as she leaned down to snap the retaining strap around his thigh, and then straightened up to look at him.

Holding her gaze, he slid his blaster smoothly into its holster, and pulled her into his arms. She slid her hands up to rest lightly on his shoulders and grinned up at him, clearly pleased with herself.

Han gazed into her dark eyes and swallowed hard, tightening his grip around her. "You know what I'm going to say right now, don't you?"

"Yes." She lifted her face to his, stretching up to brush a smiling kiss against his lips. "I know."

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**Thanks: **

**With thanks **to my (very prompt!) beta readers Sue Zahn, Gus Downey, YellinYee, BonesBooth206 and CoriMariee.

****End note:**** This started out as a very fluffy "plot bunny" based on the phrase that I started with: "Han gets his blaster back." As ever, though, it took me something like 7000 words to get to the point.

Please consider reviewing or commenting. I write for my own pleasure, but I publish it on the Web because I like receiving feedback!

End
file.